



2026 CITY ARTS PARTNERSHIP (CAP) GRANT GUIDELINES

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Friday, May 15, 2026 at 5:00 pm

No applications will be accepted after this date and time.

PURPOSE

To provide unrestricted general operating funds to arts-and-cultural heritage organizations that demonstrate strong arts-mission fulfillment, fiscal responsibility and sound management.

ELIGIBILITY

Arts-and-cultural heritage nonprofits with a 501(c)3 designation based in and serving Fargo and West Fargo, ND and Moorhead, MN *and* that have annual operating budgets of \$100,000 and above.

ON-LINE APPLICATION

The application portal will open on **Wednesday, April 1.**

The link to the application, the application preview with required questions and the review criteria and scoring rubric used by the panelists can be found at theartspartnership.net/arts-hub/grants-and-funding/ under the CAP Grant button.

QUESTIONS/SUPPORT

Make certain to read these guidelines and the application preview thoroughly; if you still have questions, contact Tania Blanich, Executive Director, at tania@theartspartnership.net.

TAP will offer a virtual meeting to answer questions and cover some basics for submitting your best application.

Wednesday, April 8 from 8:00 – 9:00 am

Grant writers new to the City Arts Partnership grant application process are *strongly encouraged* to attend the meeting.

Email tania@theartspartnership.net by 5 pm on Monday, April 6 with the name and contact information of the person from your organization that will attend so that we can forward them the link.

Applicants may ask TAP staff to review their draft application up to one week before the application deadline.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The City Arts Partnership (CAP) grants invest in the overall health and success of the Metro area's arts sector and, by extension, the health and success of our community at large. CAP Grants provide general operating support (GOS) to our community's mid-sized to largest arts-and-culture entities.

We know how challenging it is to find general operating support, so The Arts Partnership wants to provide our local arts organizations with the unrestricted support needed to do their mission-related work. The grants are funded by the Cities of Fargo, Moorhead and West Fargo.

In Fall 2023, TAP's Board of Directors added a fourth core value: *Advance equitable access to and inclusion through the arts*. For TAP's staff and board, these words will serve as a continual reminder to consciously and deliberately work to make our programs equitable and inclusive – and to encourage our Grantees, Partners and other arts sector colleagues to do the same. We hope that our support in the arts sector can ensure that *all* in our community – people who are BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, from the disability community, immigrants, from low-income families and from other underrepresented and underserved groups – can participate in and engage with the arts.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants must be **all** of the following:

- An organization that is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt arts-and-cultural heritage organization or an arts-and-cultural heritage K-12 school program that serves all three of the Tri-Cities' school districts
- Physically located in Fargo or West Fargo, ND or Moorhead, MN and primarily serve those three communities
- Have an **explicitly stated** arts-and-cultural heritage mission
- Have an annual operating budget of \$100,000 or more
- Have at least one paid staff person in a position of artistic/programming management or administrative oversight; the paid staff person may be full-time or part-time, salaried or contracted
- Able to separately identify its arts programming revenues and expenses from its non-arts financial activity

Additionally, CAP grant applicants must:

- Have received at least one CAP or Community Cultivation (CC) grant in the previous 2 years
- Be up to date with all reporting requirements if a current CAP or CC grant recipient
- Regularly offer arts programming as an integral part of its mission; such activities must represent at least 20% of the organization's programming
- Demonstrate general fiscal responsibility and agree to use the grant funds to further the arts in our community
- If requested by TAP, provide financial statements audited or reviewed by an outside CPA and/or produced by an accounting system such as QuickBooks

Eligibility

If you've never applied for a CAP grant, it's been more than two years since you've received a grant from TAP or you don't otherwise fit the criteria for eligibility to apply for a CAP grant, you *may* be eligible to apply for a Community Cultivation Grant. More info at theartspartnership.net/arts-hub/grants-and-funding/ or contact Tania Blanich at tania@theartspartnership.net.

- Submit a complete and accurate application by the stated deadline

Ineligible applicants include:

- Arts-and-cultural heritage entities *not* based in and/or *not* primarily serving the Tri-Cities of Fargo and West Fargo, ND and/or Moorhead, MN
- Stand-alone arts-and-cultural heritage nonprofits with an annual budget *under* \$100,000
- An arts-and-cultural heritage organization that is not a stand-alone 501(c)3 organization or one that is fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)3 organization
- An otherwise eligible organization that has not received at least one CAP or CC grant in the past 2 years
- An arts-and-cultural heritage organization based in the Metro that serves an entire region or state
- An arts, music or theatre section of a larger entity that is not solely arts-and-cultural heritage focused, such as college or university, an individual K-12 school or a K-12 school district or a park district
- Arts-adjacent entities, including those whose mission is not *explicitly or solely* devoted to the arts and/or cultural heritage
- An organization that plans to submit a Community Cultivation Grant application

Use of Grant Funds

The CAP grants provide general operating support, which means that the funds are unrestricted. However, some activities may *not* be funded with these grant funds. **Ineligible activities** include:

- Activities that do not have arts and/or cultural heritage as their primary focus
- Endowment funds
- Capital expenditures
- Fundraising
- Reduction or elimination of accumulated deficits
- Activities that are primarily for religious socialization or political purposes
- Re-granting or scholarships

Grant Tiers

Applicants for the CAP Grants are grouped into two grant tiers:

- **General Operating Support I (GOS I)** – grant awards of \$5,000 to \$10,000
 - Annual budget of \$400,000 and above
 - Paid professional staff, full-time management
 - Year-round programming
 - Financial statements audited or reviewed by an outside CPA
- **General Operating Support II (GOS II)** – grant awards between \$3,000 and \$5,000
 - Annual budget between \$100,000 and \$399,999
 - Paid administrative or program staff, full- or part-time staff, salaried or contract (may be seasonal)
 - Year-round or seasonal programming

- Financial statements professionally audited or reviewed by an outside CPA *or* a balance sheet and profit and loss statement produced by an accounting system like QuickBooks

GRANT REVIEW PROCESS AND CRITERIA

TAP is committed to a transparent grant review process and to that end, holds open, public meetings at which the grants are reviewed and discussed.

Applicants are encouraged to attend the panel discussion; however, they will not be able to participate in the discussion *unless* the panel has a specific question to ask an organizational representative.

The CAP grant review panel consists of individuals who are invested in the Metro’s arts community, whether as arts administrators, artists or participants/supporters. Panelists generally serve no more than two consecutive years. TAP observes strict procedures to prevent any conflicts of interest. Each panel member reviews all the on-line application submissions but recuses themselves from voting on an application for an organization for which they have a conflict of interest.

Panel Review Meeting

Details about the June meeting will be sent directly to applicants by May 29, 2026.

Review Criteria and Scoring Rubric

The rubric used by the panel to make their determinations can be found at theartspartnership.net/arts-hub/grants-and-funding/ under the CAP grant button.

The panel uses the following criteria to assess all applications:

- Artistic quality, including the organization’s integrity and intention regarding its arts programming
- Impact, existing or potential, on the communities and audiences the organization serves and/or plans to serve
- Organizational capabilities: capacity, efficacy and organizational and fiscal stability

Panelists score applicants in each of the criteria; those scores are averaged, providing a highest possible score of 30. Applications must receive 20 or more points to be considered for funding. Grant award amounts will be based on the application’s final ranking.

GRANT ADMINISTRATION

The grant period is for 12 months, beginning no earlier than July 1, 2026 and concluding by June 30, 2027.

The TAP Board approves the grant awards, based on the Grant Review Panel’s recommendations. Applicants will receive email notification regarding whether or not the application has been funded, typically within forty-five (45) days of the application deadline. If the application is not funded, applicants may contact TAP staff to receive feedback.

If awarded a grant, the applicant must sign a formal grant agreement, which includes detailed information about funding distribution, reporting requirements (due by or on April 30 of the grant year) and recognition of support.

The grant funds are disbursed in late June.

FILLING OUT YOUR APPLICATION

- ***Make sure you are in the CAP Grants section*** at theartspartnership.net/arts-hub/grants-and-funding
- Read through the guidelines, application preview and scoring rubric **thoroughly** before starting the process – and use them as a reference while working on your application.
- Although the online application form allows you to save your work and return to it, we **strongly** recommend using the application preview document to draft your answers to the questions.
 - Working offline helps avoid technical glitches that could result in lost work.
 - If you would like TAP staff to review a draft application, it will be easier for both you and TAP to work with a Word document.
 - Once your narrative is ready, you can cut and paste the final narrative into the application form and upload the attachments.
- If you have any technical difficulties, try using a different web browser, for example, Explorer instead of Chrome. Sometimes that’s all it takes to resolve the problem.

NOTIFICATION OF APPLICATION RECEIPT

Applicants will receive an email confirmation of submission. If you have not received an email within two (2) business days, contact Tania Blanich at tania@theartspartnership.net.

TAP staff review submitted applications for completeness and eligibility. Applicants are notified within ten (10) business days if a proposal contains significant errors or omissions or is otherwise ineligible.

QUESTIONS?

Contact Tania Blanich at tania@theartspartnership.net.